

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 518

October 27, 1995, 9:29 a.m.
Page S-15980 Temp. Record

BALANCED BUDGET RECONCILIATION/Medicaid Requirements

SUBJECT: Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995 . . . S. 1357. Gramm amendment No. 2978.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 23-76

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1357, the Balanced Budget Reconciliation Act of 1995, will result in a balanced budget in seven years, as scored by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The bill will also provide a \$245 billion middle-class tax cut, \$141.4 billion of which will be to provide a \$500 per child tax credit.

The Gramm amendment would strike sections 2111(a)(2) and 2111(a)(3) from the bill. Those sections will mandate that States must provide Medicaid as an entitlement: to any pregnant woman or child under the age of 13 whose family income does not exceed 100 percent of the poverty line applicable to a family of the size involved; and to any individual with a disability as defined by the Supplemental Security Income Program as of the date of enactment of this Act (see vote No. 513 for related debate).

Those favoring the amendment contended:

The reason this bill will make Medicaid a discretionary, block grant program is that the States will be able to do a better job of providing health care as a welfare benefit than the Federal Government has been able to provide it as an entitlement. Both Republican and Democratic Governors have asked for State control over Medicaid, and we think we should give it to them without strings attached. When the Finance Committee began hearings on this bill, the proposal was to give a simple block grant. Then, an amendment was adopted telling the States that they must give aid to any pregnant woman or child under the age of 13 who was below the poverty line, and to any disabled person as defined by each State. On the floor, an amendment was adopted taking away from a State the right to determine for itself who was disabled; instead, the amendment would require the States to use the Federal Government's definition (see vote No. 513).

The underlying assumption for these conditions is that the States, left to their own devices, will not take care of their own needy citizens. This assumption is patently and arrogantly false--Governors and State legislators are elected just as we in Washington are,

(See other side)

YEAS (23)		NAYS (76)				NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (23 or 43%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (30 or 57%)		Democrats (46 or 100%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Ashcroft		Abraham	Jeffords	Akaka	Inouye		
Bennett		Bond	Kassebaum	Baucus	Johnston		
Brown		Burns	Kempthorne	Biden	Kennedy		
Coats		Campbell	Lugar	Bingaman	Kerrey		
Cochran		Chafee	McConnell	Boxer	Kerry		
Dole		Cohen	Murkowski	Bradley	Kohl		
Faircloth		Coverdell	Pressler	Breaux	Lautenberg		
Gramm		Craig	Shelby	Bryan	Leahy		
Grams		D'Amato	Simpson	Bumpers	Levin		
Grassley		DeWine	Snowe	Byrd	Lieberman		
Hatch		Domenici	Specter	Conrad	Mikulski		
Helms		Frist	Stevens	Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
Hutchison		Gorton	Thomas	Dodd	Moynihan		
Inhofe		Gregg	Thurmond	Dorgan	Murray		
Kyl		Hatfield	Warner	Exon	Nunn		
Lott				Feingold	Pell		
Mack				Feinstein	Pryor		
McCain				Ford	Reid		
Nickles				Glenn	Robb		
Roth				Graham	Rockefeller		
Santorum				Harkin	Sarbanes		
Smith				Heflin	Simon		
Thompson				Hollings	Wellstone		

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

and we believe they are more, not less, responsive to the wishes of their citizens than are we. The reason is that they are more accountable to their voters than are Members; if the voters in a State have to pay for a vast array of new entitlements enacted by Congress, they may not be able to retaliate at all if their particular Members opposed those new entitlements. Similarly, if Congress passes laws that are harmful to a State's neediest citizens, the voters of a State will not be able to go after Congress if their own Members opposed those laws. When the burden comes from the legislators within a State, though, the voters have a much greater opportunity for responding.

Our colleagues' rhetoric on this amendment has been typically extreme, but the tide of history is running against their paternalistic, centrist brand of liberalism. Trust fund millionaire politicians who measure their compassion by the amount of other people's tax money they spend on their favorite social programs, and who run for reelection based on the amount of porkbarrel spending they bring home are on the decline. Americans are fed up with this type of politician. We have no doubt that our colleagues really think they are being highly principled in standing up for what are nothing more than Federal mandates. We do not. We will lose on this vote, but, as the number of big-government liberals continues to decline, we know we will eventually win on similar votes.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

Senators may say that this amendment is just to give States flexibility in running the Medicaid program, but the truth is that is an effort to deny Medicaid for pregnant women, children, and the disabled. We absolutely reject the notion that there should be anything remotely optional about giving aid to people within these three groups when they are in need. States do not need "flexibility" to decide who is pregnant, or who is disabled, or who is a child--these matters are rather obvious, and should be treated the same everywhere in the country. If someone is desperately ill and needs medical treatment, that treatment should not be denied due to "flexibility." The idea that these mandates are onerous is false. Over the next 7 years the Federal Government will give the States \$800 billion to run Medicaid. Outside of these three groups, no direction will be given as to how the program must be run. The most minimal of benefits could be provided. These mandates are very loose strings indeed to attach to \$800 billion in grants, but apparently they are too much for the supporters of the Gramm amendment. They are not too much for us. The Gramm amendment is a heartless, cruel amendment which deserves to go down to crushing defeat.